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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

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APR 6 1934 ★

U. S. Department of Agriculture

A radio discussion by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC radio stations, Tuesday, March 30, 1934.

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Hello Folks: One day last week I was invited to inspect and sample a unique exhibit. It was a collection of frozen fruits and vegetables, the real ripened fruits and the fresh vegetables that grew last summer and which had been put up in packages and frozen and kept frozen ever since. There were strawberries, raspberries, dewberries, peaches, cherries, snap beans, peas, spinach, sweet corn and several others. These fruits and vegetables had been gathered when they were in prime condition for use, washed very carefully and packed in cans and cartons. In the case of the fruits a fairly heavy syrup was added but the vegetables were packed in a weak brine but crowded closely together in the packages. In all cases the air was excluded. The freezing was done at a temperature of 16 degrees and the products were kept at that temperature.

Freezing is a new process for keeping fresh fruits and vegetables and can only be carried on where you have cold storage space available. The frozen pack industry has already reached enormous proportions, millions of pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables being packed annually by this method. The berries like strawberries are used mainly for making ice cream and the cherries for pies. When the strawberries are allowed to thaw out they are fine for short-cake or for eating as a desert and they look and taste almost like fresh strawberries that have had sugar sprinkled over them then allowed to remain in the refrigerator for an hour or two and you know how a little of the juice of the berries will mix with the sugar and form a beautiful light red syrup around the berries. The frozen cherries make cherry pie that is just about as fine as that made from cherries that are picked right from the tree. I'm somewhat of an authority on cherry pie and I'm telling you the cherry pie made from these frozen cherries is really good.

We are finding new ways to preserve and to store foods also better ways to prepare and to use foods; ways that retain the flavor and the vitamins they contain. The frozen pack method of storing fruits and vegetables is not liable to displace canning and drying for the thousands of home gardeners, at least not for many a day and my reason for telling you about this method is on account of its being an interesting step in advance in the science of storage. I do want to suggest that those of you who can fruits and vegetables for home use strive to put up a better pack, and a better pack must have its beginning in the garden with the growing of the best possible quality for the canning. No canning, freezing, drying or storage process is going to improve the quality or flavor of any fruit or vegetable, in other words you are not going to get a better product out of your cans than you put into them.

(over)

My suggestion is that you make special plantings of corn, tomatoes, beans and peas for canning rather than to depend upon whatever is left from the regular plantings for table use. Select varieties that are suitable for canning. On several occasions I have mentioned the Marglobe tomato and I have found the Marglobe one of the best both for canning and for use while fresh. The Pritchard and the Break O'Day, both excellent new varieties, are a little earlier than the Marglobe but I believe I like the Marglobe best for canning.

While we are on the subject of quality in vegetables for immediate use and for canning let me suggest that you try the comparatively new snap bean known as Bountiful or Early Bountiful. It is a green bean, has flat pods and is very tender and stringless. It is fine as an early spring and a late fall bean. The Tendergreen is another very fine early snap bean that is excellent for canning. It has slender, round pods and as the name implies it is tender and green in color. When it comes to sweet corn, I don't know of anything better than Golden Bantam but there is a new variety known as Golden Cross Bantam that is considered by many to be an improvement over the regular Golden Bantam. For midseason and late planting the Country Gentleman and Stowells Evergreen are two varieties of sweet corn that are hard to beat and they are both excellent for canning. Quite often we find the Golden Bantam and Golden Cross Bantam being canned on the cob, one-half gallon and gallon cans or jars being used for the purpose. You can get about eight or nine ears of Golden Bantam in a gallon can but this method is not very economical because so little actual corn can be placed in a can.

In addition to having the right varieties it takes good soil and cultivation to grow high quality products for your table during the summer and for canning. Insect and disease control also play an important part. We are rapidly overcoming certain plant diseases by the creation of resistant varieties. The three varieties of tomatoes I mentioned, Marglobe, Pritchard and Break O'Day, are all quite resistant to the fusarium wilt, a disease that has made the growing of some of older varieties of tomatoes practically impossible on soils that have become infested with the disease. The "Yellows" resistant varieties of cabbage will grow on land that is so filled with the organism that causes cabbage yellows that ordinary varieties fail utterly. The Golden Cross Bantam sweet corn is resistant to Stuart's Disease, a new disease of sweet corn.

I want to tell you folks we have made a lot of progress during the past few years, progress in our methods of living and especially in overcoming the difficulties that have grown up around our food supply and its production. I believe the coming season will be a mighty good time for us to try out some of these improved varieties and methods and perhaps by putting in our besticks we can make 1934 our banner gardening year.

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